

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 0344

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO

SUBJECT: PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS IN TIMES OF CRISIS AND TENSION

REF: A) USNATO 0217 (NOTAL) B) STATE 012806 (NOTAL)

1. DURING JANUARY 21 POLAD'S, UNDER TOPIC OF PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS IN TIMES OF CRISIS AND TENSION, UK REP (MARGETSON) DISTRIBUTED FOLLOWING PAPER. SEVERAL ALLIES AND CHAIRMAN WELCOMED AND AGREED WITH THRUST OF UK PAPER.

2. BEGIN TEXT

NATO POLICY ON PUBLIC RELATIONS IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY

1. THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE HAVE BEEN ASKED BY THE COUNCIL TO DEFINE MORE PRECISELY ALLIANCE POLICY TOWARDS PUBLIC RELATIONS IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY, BOTH FROM THE STAND POINT OF ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND AS REGARDS PRESENTATION TO THE PUBLIC OF THE DECISIONS WHICH HAVE TO BE TAKEN.

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2. IN TIME OF EMERGENCY NATIONAL AUTHORITIES WILL USE THEIR OWW ORGANISATIONS FOR BREIFING THE PRESS AND MEDIA: THEY WOULD NOT WISH TO ALLOW NATO TO ASSUME PUBLIC RELATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH WOULD RUN COUNTER TO THIS. NEVERTHELESS

THERE WOULD AT SUCH TIMES BE GREAT PRESS INTEREST IN MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL AND DPC AND IN DECISIONS TAKEN BY THOSE BODIES. IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC AND POTENTIALLY HARMFUL TO FAIL TO MEET THIS INTEREST IN SOME MEASURE AT NATO HEADQUARTERS. PROVIDED THERE WAS CLOSE LIAISON BETWEEN THE NATO INFORMATION AUTHORITIES AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE A GREAT MEASURE OF COORDINATION WITHIN THE ALLIANCE IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS.

3. THE FIRST REQUISITE WOULD BE FOR THE COUNCIL/DPC TO CONSIDER AT EVERY MEETING THE PUBLIC RELATIONS ASPECT OF THEIR WORK. PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES, ADVISED AS APPROPRIATE BY MEMBERS OF THEIR STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR INFORMATION, WOULD CONSIDER AND BE ASKED TO APPROVE THE LINE TO BE TAKEN WITH THE PRESS ON MATTERS DISCUSSED. ACTING ON COUNCIL/DPC INSTRUCTIONS, THE NATO SPOKESMAN WOULD THEN BE IN A POSITION TO BRIEF THE PRESS AND MEDIA ACCORDINGLY.

4. SUCH PRESS BRIEFINGS COULD BE ATTENDED BY DELEGATION OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE FOR INFORMATION MATTERS, WHO WOULD THEN BE IN A POSITION TO INFORM THEIR NATIONAL AUTHORITIES IMMEDIATELY ON WHAT HAD PASSED. NATIONAL AUTHORITIES COULD THEN PURSUE THEIR OWN INFORMATION EFFORTS IN FULL KNOWLEDGE OF ACTION TAKEN AT NATO HEADQUARTERS.

5. A FURTHER NECESSARY ELEMENT OF COORDINATION WOULD BE TO ENSURE THAT NATO MILITARY INFORMATION BUREAUX EG AT SHAPE WERE KEPT FULLY INFORMED OF THE INFORMATION WORK AT NATO HEADQUARTERS, THAT THEIR ACTION WITH THE PRESS WAS STRICTLY IN LINE WITH THAT AUTHORISED BY THE COUNCIL/DPC. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS SHOULD FALL TO THE NATO INFORMATION AUTHORITIES.

6. IT WOULD APPEAR UNREALISTIC TO ENDEAVOR TO DRAFT INSTRUCTIONS IN ADVANCE OF AN EMERGENCY FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION IN CONNECTION WITH STATES OF READINESS WITHIN THE NATO ALERT SYSTEM. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF EMERGENCIES ARE SO VARIED THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO DO SO WOULD PROBABLY BE A WASTE OF TIME.
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7. IN BRIEF, ALLIANCE POLICY TOWARDS PUBLIC RELATIONS IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY SHOULD CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:-

(A) THE COUNCIL/DPC WOULD CONSIDER THE INFORMATION ASPECT OF ALL MATTERS DISCUSSED AND WOULD BE ASKED TO APPROVE A LINE TO BE TAKEN WITH THE PRESS;

(B) THE NATO SPOKESMAN WOULD THEREAFTER ACT ON THE COUNCIL/DPC'S INSTRUCTIONS;

(C) DELEGATIONS WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR INFORMATION NATIONAL AUTHORITIES OF INFORMATION ACTION TAKEN AT NATO HEADQUARTERS. NATIONAL AUTHORITIES COULD THEN DEVELOP THEIR OWN

INFORMATION EFFORT IN THE LIGHT OF SUCH ACTION.

(D) NATO INFORMATION AUTHORITIES WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THE CLOSE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION WORK OF MILITARY HEADQUARTERS WITH THAT OF THE NATO HEADQUARTERS AT BRUSSELS.
END TEXT

3. COMMENT: EVIDENT RELIEF WITH WHICH ALLIES GREETED U.K. PAPER INDICATED GENERAL LACK OF INTEREST IN THIS TOPIC. MISSION BELIEVES THAT AFTER ONE OR TWO WEEKS ON AGENDA, U.K. PAPER WILL BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING REQUIREMENT IMPOSED BY DPC. MISSION WOULD WELCOME ANY COMMENTS DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE ON U.K. PAPER, BUT WILL ASSUME DEPARTMENT CONCURRENCE IF NO COMMENTS ARE RECEIVED PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION OF POLADS, JANUARY 27.
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